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ABSTRACT

The Meadows Principal Improvement Program has two functional components and a research component. The functional components are designed to help improve the role of school principals in Texas. There is a preservice component to prepare new principals in instructional leadership and an inservice component to assist practicing principals in upgrading instructional leadership skills. The preservice component is 15 months long and includes a 9-month full-time building-level internship. The inservice component is an annual program consisting of at least six colloquia during the school year designed to keep principals enthusiastic and motivated, with ideas for improving their schools' instructional programs. The project's research component explores the program's impact, makes suggestions for improvement, and seeks to generalize findings for application to standard administrative preparation programs. The initial interim evaluation report using both opinions of interns and their supervisors and objective measures found that the Meadows Program appears to be successful and superior to the regular East Texas State University program in every aspect measured. Among recommendations are that all principal certification programs should strive to provide a full-time paid internship for one year. Tables and the intern interview questions are appended. Contains four references. (MSE)

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Meadows Principal Improvement Program

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

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ABSTRACT

Meadows Principal Improvement Program

The Meadows Principal Improvement Program has two functional components and a research component. The functional components are designed to help improve the principalship in the State of Texas namely: a preservice component which seeks to prepare new principals with a focus on instructional leadership and an inservice component which seeks to assist practicing principals in upgrading their instructional leadership skills and introduce them to new ideas which can be used in leading their faculties and educational programs. The preservice component is fifteen months in length and includes a full time internship at the building level for nine months. The inservice component is an annual program which consists of at least six colloquiums during the school year designed to keep principals enthusiastic and motivated with ideas to improve the instructional programs at their schools. The research component of the project seeks to explore the impact of the program and make suggestions from the data collected to improve the Meadows Program and possibly generalize findings that can be applied to standard administrative preparation programs.

Meadows Principal Improvement Program

Introduction:

The Meadows Program was developed at a time when the nation was becoming aware of the need for school reform particularly in relation to the role and function of the principal on the educational program at the building level. This description will review the program as developed at East Texas State University operating with the cooperation and financial assistance of the Meadows Foundation of Texas, a foundation which has as its interest the Arts and Education in the State of Texas.

Description of the Program:

The Meadows Principal Improvement Program has two functioning components which are designed to improve the instructional leadership skills of principals in Texas. These include an inservice component which is focused toward assisting practicing principals in providing the leadership necessary to improve instruction programs in their schools and a preservice component which is focused toward providing skilled teachers with the leadership skills necessary to make them competent instructional oriented principals.

The program encompassing the preservice component is fifteen months long beginning in June and ending at the end of August of the following year. During this time the participant begins the first summer by taking course work specifically designed to prepare the student to fill an intern administrator's role beginning at the end of summer school in August. The course work includes the following: The Principalship;

Interpersonal Communications and Group Dynamics; Curriculum Development, Administrative Use of the Computer, and General Administration and Organization of Education. At the completion of these courses, the participant (called a Meadows Fellow) begins work as a full time administrative intern in a school under the direction of a selected principal who acts as both supervisor and mentor during the next nine months. While an intern, the Fellow also participates in additional course work to complete the certification process and a colloquium series focusing on improving instruction. At the conclusion of the internship in May, the Fellow returns to the East Texas State University campus for a second summer of course work which completes the requirements for a Texas Mid-management (principal/building level) Certificate.

This program was developed four years ago with a proposal to the Meadows Foundation of Texas when it was believed there was a need to improve the instructional aspects of the principalship in Texas. The Meadows Foundation assisted in this endeavor by providing financial support. Most notable of this support was the $11,000 stipend to help support each of ten Fellows' salaries. Other programmatic support is also furnished by the Foundation and includes support for attendance of the Fellows at professional meetings both in state and out-of-state. These professional meetings have included the summer workshops for Texas elementary principals and secondary principals and the NASSP or NAESP national conventions.

It is important to realize the Meadows Program has been developed parallel to the regular administration preparation programs that are offered by the department of educational administration.

Three cohort groups of Meadows Fellows have completed the fifteen-month program. Each year has seen an increase in the number of Fellows in the program, with local school districts supporting the costs of the interns that exceed those contributions by the Foundation. In 1986 nine Fellows completed the initial year's program; this was followed by twelve Fellow in 1987 and fourteen in 1988. There are seventeen Fellows in the fourth cohort group which entered the program in June of 1989.

During the initial summer program, almost all course work is completed by the cohort group with no other students involved. As the Fellows continue their studies, they take course work with other students;. although the cohort group continues to provide support for interaction and ideas which are shared.

Among the most important features of the Meadows Principal Improvement Program are the following:

1. **A full time internship for nine months in which the Meadows Fellow works closely with the building principal, who acts as mentor and advisor.** The traditional internship for the mid-management certificate is a one-semester experience which includes approximately 140 hours of internship experience. The Meadows internship arrangement provides many more contact hours than the traditional internship for the mid-management certificate. Also, the Meadows intern normally serves as a full-time intern without classroom instructional responsibilities.

2. **Inclusion in a cohort group of students when beginning the program during the initial summer.** This group becomes a support group for the next fifteen months that provides support and advice during the formal studies and the internship experience. Experience has

shown that this group continues as an informal support group as the student completes his/her program and takes on a more permanent administrative role. Thus, the new administrator has a network of colleagues that can provide a sounding board for ideas and sharing solutions to problems encountered.

3. **A focused initial study on the principalship and related skills that will serve to prepare the student for the intensive internship emphasizing instructional leadership.** The initial instruction is offered exclusively for the Meadows cohort and is arranged with the knowledge that the group will be filling internship roles shortly. In the traditional mid-management program, the student may begin with core courses; however, the mix of students enrolled in the traditional principalship course normally ranges greatly.

4. **Specialized study in personal communications and interpersonal dynamics--an area which is taught by the counseling and guidance department.** This offering is not available to graduate students in counseling nor has it been available in the past for the traditional mid-management students. The reactions of students in the program and the success of this area indicate that it should be part of the traditional mid-management program.

5. **An introduction to and participation in the state and national principals' organizations.** The Fellows first experience in this regard is usually the second week of the summer, immediately after starting the Meadows Program. This exposure helps the new Fellow to relate readily to the principal's role and to observe in a professional setting the important issues confronting principals and their schools. An added benefit is the cohesiveness of the group that jells very quickly as a result

of their traveling together. During the second semester, the Fellows attend a national principals' convention, either elementary or secondary. This experience widens their horizons for professional involvement and ideas beyond the Texas borders.

6. **Participation in a colloquium series emphasizing the instructional role of the principal.** Each year this includes six day-long programs to help a practitioner continue to grow professionally. Examples of program topics include the following: learning styles, teacher observation and conferencing, improving staff climate, improving discipline and classroom management from the principal's perspective, alternative assessment strategies, situational management for the principal, the effective schools' movement, and curriculum development and alignment. Programs for the current year include the following: school culture, communications in instructional leadership, improving the school climate, curriculum development, administrator's role in enhancing thinking skills, and emerging educational technology.

Students in a traditional preparation program may attend these programs; however, in practice, most students in administration preparation programs are teaching during the day and cannot be released for this activity. In the Meadows program, the district and the participant agree that the Fellow will participate in all six programs.

Practicing principals are also in attendance at this colloquium series. This provides a continuing education experience for the active principals as well as the opportunity for the Meadows Fellows to come into close contact with principals in this professional setting.

Efforts are made to continually improve the Meadows program. An advisory committee made up of administrators from area schools--

including superintendents, assistant superintendents, instructional personnel, and principals--meets at least twice annually to discuss the program's relationship with local school districts and to develop goals for the Meadows program to help meet the needs of the districts. One meeting is held following a conference with the current interns who offer their reactions to the program when approximately half way through the fifteen-month period. In addition, the results of a questionnaire sent to all cooperating superintendents and principals assigned an intern are available to offer suggestions, and relate strengths, and identify areas needing improvement.

In the context of achievement, the program has been gratifying and productive. It has become a very important component of the work of the department of educational administration at ETSU. It has not displaced the traditional mid-management program (which most students takes three to five years or more to complete), but it has offered an opportunity to test some new ideas in course offerings and structure of the program. Those ideas which have proven themselves effective can be extended to the traditional program.

At the completion of the program in which the current cohort is engaged, fifty-two Meadows Fellows will have been prepared through this program to become principals with instructional leadership skill emphasis. Assuming a twenty-five year career for these individuals as principals or other administrators, it can be conservatively estimated that they will impact 500,000 students as instructional leaders.

Cooperation with other agencies is an important aspect of the program. The principal agencies that are closely involved in this program the Meadows Foundation of Texas and local school districts

that participate either in the preservice component or the inservice component or both. Officials of the Foundation are in close contact regularly, attend one or more of the inservice programs each year, are present at the introduction of the new group of Fellows, and recognize the group completing the program at a luncheon each summer. The local school districts are involved by their effort to nominate potential Fellows each spring and their participation in inservice programs. The cooperating principal serving as the mentor to the Fellow is invited to attend the colloquium series and be with the Fellow when recognized at the luncheon in the summer. Also, the topics presented at the colloquium are approved by the Texas Education Agency for Advanced Instructional Leadership Training and Management Leadership Training.

The inservice component was designed to provide practicing principals with an opportunity to be exposed to outstanding ideas which could assist them in making productive changes in instructional programs. This component of the program is now in its fifth year of operation. Approximately 125 to 225 principals have taken advantage of this resource. Example of the topics which have been presented in the colloquium series include: teaching cycles, instructional leadership, developing and improving the school climate, learning styles, situational leadership, classroom/school control/management, interpersonal communications, alternative methods of measuring student progress, instituting the teaching of the work ethic, and teacher evaluation and conferencing.

With this arrangement the Meadows Principal Improvement Program has become, as the Foundation wished it, a cooperative

endeavor with the local school districts, East Texas State University, and the Meadows Foundation of Texas.

Results:

The evaluation component of the Meadows Project has sought to examine the results of the activity. Frank W. Lutz, a member of the educational administration faculty and director of the Policy Center for Elementary and Secondary Education, directs the evaluation component of the program. An interim evaluation report has been completed and is attached. This interim report points out some important contrasts of the Meadows Program when viewed in relation to the department's regular program.

MEADOWS PRINCIPALSHIP PROGRAM
INTERIM EVALUATION

Prepared by
Frank W. Lutz, Director
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East Texas State University
August, 1989

1989 Interim Meadows Principalship Program Evaluation*

by

Frank W. Lutz

The purpose of this interim report is to begin to evaluate the Meadows Principalship Program so that some conclusions might be formulated and recommendations for improvement of East Texas State University's regular Mid-Management Certification program might be made. Although no hypothesis will be tested, inferential statistics are used, where appropriate, to examine differences between regular program and Meadows program participants.

Method

Two major areas of data are used in this interim report: (1) opinions of administrative interns and their supervisors and (2) objective paper-and-pencil measures related to the programs and their effects on the participants. This latter category (objective data) includes: (a) the Work Environment Scale (WES) developed by Moos (1981), (b) the Leadership Opinion Questionnaire (LOQ) developed by Fleishman (1960), and (c) the Instruction Leadership Activities, Belief and Characteristics of Principals of Effective School scale (ILES) developed by Koger (1987). The WES was verified by Daum (1988) for use with principals and is slightly adapted here for use with principal interns.

All Meadows Fellows were surveyed using all instruments and opinionnaires. Forty-five fellows (over the four groups) responded. Two groups of regular program participants, who were at the time completing their internship (spring 87 and spring 88), were surveyed and 42 responded. In some cases (as will be seen in the analysis, not everyone responded to all questions.

*Mr. Kirk McGehee is the research assistant for The Meadows Program Evaluation. His assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Analysis

Demographic data, which are descriptive of the overall type of people recruited into the two programs, can be seen in Table 1 in Appendix A. Based on the demographic data in Table 1, it seems that Meadows and regular participants are about alike in all areas except:

1. The Meadows Program has recruited a larger percentage of women.
2. Meadows Fellows, as a group, are neither as young nor as old as regular program participants.
3. Meadows participants are less likely to have had previous experience as assistant principals.

Instructional Leadership Activities and Effective Schools

The ILES proposes to measure seven areas of principal leadership which result in "effective schools." Those areas are displayed in Table 2, Appendix A. In that table a (+) in a program row indicates that those participants were significantly higher in the area. A (-) in a program row indicates that those participants were significantly lower in that area. N.S. indicates no difference between program participants. In every area where there was a significant difference (five of the seven), the Meadows participants were higher (better) than the participants in the regular program.

Leadership Opinion Questionnaire

The LOQ (a revision of the old Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire) measures the two "classic dimensions of leadership, i.e., consideration of subordinates and initiation of structure. There was no significant difference between programs in initiation of structure, but the Meadows Fellows were significantly higher in consideration.

Work Environment Scale

The areas (from WES) in which the programs have affected their participants and a brief description of each area can be seen in Figure 1 below. Double asterisks

(**) indicate that Meadows participants feel significantly more program influence in that area. A single asterisk (*) indicates that Meadows participants felt more program influence but the difference did not reach statistical significance.

Figure 1

Relationship Dimensions

** 1. Involvement--the extent to which participants are concerned about and committed to their program.

** 2. Peer Cohesion--the extent to which participants are friendly and supportive of one another.

** 3. Supervisor Support--the extent to which faculty is supportive of participants and encourages participants to be supportive of one another.

Personal Growth Dimensions

* 4. Autonomy--the extent to which participants are encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions.

** 5. Task Orientation--the degree of emphasis on good planning, efficiency, and getting the job done.

** 6. Work Pressure--the degree to which the press of work and time urgency dominate the job milieu.

System Maintenance and System Change Dimensions

* 7. Clarity--the extent to which participants know what to expect in their daily routine and how, explicitly, rules and policies are communicated.

** 8. Control--the extent to which the faculty uses rules and pressures to keep participants under control.

** 9. Innovation--the degree of emphasis on variety, change, and new approaches.

Internship Opinionnaire

Questions on the opinionnaire asked about the participant's involvement in the internship portion of the programs. These data are heavily skewed. All participants' (both Meadows and Regular) believe that the internship phase of the principalship programs is the most important and helpful phase of the program. Responses ranged in both programs from "more important than any other one

course" to "more important than the (total) rest of the program." Meadows participants, who have a full-year/full-time internship as opposed to a part-time/one-semester internship, report more involvement in the internship, less difficulty in getting access to administrative activities, and having sufficient time to complete tasks (see Table 3 in Appendix A).

In addition, based on information in Table 3, Meadows Fellows get great superintendent involvement in their placement (Question #1), experience less difficulty in all aspects of their internship (Question #2), have about the same support from on-site administrators (Question #3), have more opportunity to meet with other interns (Question #4), believe that meeting with other interns was very helpful (Question #4a), and believe that the internship experience was and will be very helpful when they become practitioners (Questions #5 and #6). Of these questions, 4 and 4a seem more important (and usable) as program modification options (i.e., requiring interns to meet as a seminar group during the internship).

Tentative Conclusions

Based on the data collected to date, the following tentative conclusions may be helpful.

1. Over all, the Meadows Program appears to be successful and superior to the regular East Texas State University (ETSU) program in every aspect measured.
2. Meadows Fellows are higher in both LOQ dimensions, statistically significant in the consideration dimension.
3. Meadows Fellows are higher in every ILES dimension, reaching statistical significance in five of the seven dimensions.
4. The Meadows Program itself is perceived as more effective in every one of the WES dimensions, reaching statistical significance in seven of the nine dimensions.

There are several major factors which may account for this success of the Meadows Program.

1. Meadows Fellows have a full-time paid internship for one year.

2. Meadows Fellows complete their major course work in cohort groups, attending class full time for two summers--one prior to the internship year and one following.

3. Some courses have been combined and others added only for the Meadows program.

4. There is strong mentorship in the Meadows program, employing both practitioner and professor mentors.

5. The competition and subsequent selection process for entrance into the Meadows program is much more rigorous than in the regular program. This alone could account for the differences apparent in this interim evaluation. (i.e., If only one in four were admitted into the regular program, that program might also be elite.)

6. Related to the selection process, a much higher percentage of women have been recruited into the Meadows program as compared to the regular programs.

Recommendations

Based on an analysis of the data from this evaluation, the following recommendations could be made at this time.

1. All principal certification programs should strive to provide a full-time paid internship for one year. Recent national studies have made the same recommendation without such convincing empirical data. State legislatures and foundations should be lobbied as sources of funding necessary to make this recommendation a practical reality. North Carolina has already funded such a plan, including a full-year residency for study in addition (Forsyth, 1989).

2. Cohort grouping of some fashion should be carefully considered as a required part of the regular program.

3. The course adjustments (adding new courses and combining some existing courses) should be considered in the regular program.

4. Stronger practitioner- and professor-mentor/student relationships should be fostered in the regular program.

5. The competition and rigor of the selection process could be incorporated into the regular program. In order to establish the same procedures in the regular program, two things are surely necessary:

   (a) greater program funding, and
   (b) lower student/professor ratios in the regular programs.

6. Women and other minorities are still under represented in educational administration. Greater emphasis and funding will be necessary to alter this in the future.

Note: The data, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this report have been reviewed by the members of the Department of Educational Administration, ETSU. Their comments and recommendations were solicited and taken into account. The report remains the responsibility of the author.

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APPENDIX A
TABLES 1, 2, AND 3

Table 1 *

Demographic Data on the Program Participants:
Regular Program v Meadows Program

Variable	Sex		Age				Teaching Experience					Asst. Prin. Exp.		Prin. Exp.	
	M	F	-30	31-39	46-49	50+	0-5	5-10	11-15	16-20	20+	YES	NO	YES	NO
Meadows	13-29%	32-71%	None	30-67%	15-33%	None	5-11%	14-31%	11-24%	14-31%	1-2%	23-51%	22-49%	2-4%	43-96%
Regular	18-43%	24-57%	6-14%	21-50%	13-31%	2-5%	5-19%	13-31%	11-26%	14-31%	3-7%	8-19%	34-81%	4-9%	38-90%

Variable	CIDEG **		HIGHEST DEGREE				ENROLLMENT BLDG. WORKED				RACE	
	YES	NO	BS/BA	MASTERS	ED.S	DOCT.	-500	500-999	1K-1999	2000+	WHITE	NON-WHITE
MEADOWS	5-11%	40-89%	8-18%	37-82%	None	None	21-47%	14-31%	9-20%	2-2%	36-80%	9-20%
Regular	5-12%	36-88%	8-19%	30-71%	1-2%	3-7%	14-33%	11-26%	13-31%	4-9%	37-88%	5-19%

* The first number indicates the number of subjects in the sub-category; the second number is the % of the total category.
** Holds certificate in Curriculum and Instruction.

Table 2

ILES Differences Between Meadows and Regular Participants

ILES Variable/ Program	Establishes Clear Goals	Involvement With Teachers	Monitors Teachers	Evaluates Student Progress	Coordinates Instruction	Provides Orderly School	High Expectations for Students/Staff
Meadows	N.S.	+	+	+	+	N.S.	+
Regular	N.S.	-	-	-	-	N.S.	-

Table 3

Analysis of Intern Interview:

Meadows v Regular Program

1. Location of the internship was decided/approved by:

	Meadows	Regular
Superintendent	13	12
Assistant Superintendent	9	1
Principal	4	47
Assistant Principal	1	1
Professor	0	1
Total N	27	62

1a. Participation in the decision about internship location:

	Meadows	Regular
You	31.4%	49.8%
Your administrator/supervisor	53.2%	38.9%
ETSU program/professor	15.1%	8.3%

2. Have you had any problems during your internship in:

(a score of 10 indicates extremely difficult; a score of 1 indicates not at all difficult)

	Meadows	Regular
getting time free of regular duties?	3.3	4.7
not being able to participate in meaningful administrative tasks?	2.7	3.3
not getting access to real administrative decision making?	3.1	3.5
not getting involved in all of the required internship functions?	2.9	3.3

3. How much support have you received from your on-site administrator?

(a score of 10 indicates total support; score of 1 indicates little support)

Meadows	Regular
9.6	9.8

4. Have you had an opportunity to meet with other administrative interns? (a score of 10 indicates much opportunity; a score of 1 indicates no opportunity)

Meadows	Regular
9.5	5.4

4a. If yes, how helpful has this interaction been? (a score of 10 indicates very helpful; a score of 0 indicates no help)

Meadows	Regular
9.8	5.5

5. How helpful do you believe your internship experience will be when you obtain your first administrative position? (a score of 10 indicates very helpful; a score of 0 indicates no help)

Meadows	Regular
9.5	7.5

6. Given your experience in the internship, how would you rate the importance of the internship in your program? (a score of 10 indicates "more important than the entire rest of the program; a score of 0 indicates "not very worthwhile for me")

Meadows	Regular
7.5	6.7